Strand 1 Chapter 4 The influence of national and EU policy (2 weeks)

Learning Outcomes

4.1 Outline three Irish government policies that impact on three different sectors of the economy in Ireland*.

4.2 Explain the difference between government policy and legislation.

4.3 Outline the role played by business in the development of national policy.

4.4 Identify the key decision-makers in European policy development.

4.5 Distinguish between European regulations, directives, and opinions.

4.6 Evaluate the effect of one EU regulation of their choice and one EU directive of their choice on business activity in Ireland.

Chapter Overview and Introduction

From the Specification (Pg of NCCA Doc):

"Students will explore the influence of policy on business and consider how business and business interests can impact on policy."

Chapter starts on page

Hook for the chapter – content in chapter PowerPoint to go with each

Use the Starter Worksheet on EVs and SIMI.

Starter sheet here
Teacher sheet here

- Quick True/False warm-up (policy vs legislation; interest groups; EV incentives).
- Watch Dept. of Climate, Energy & Environment EV promo video (2021 Climate Action Plan).
- Short class discussion: What benefits are there for businesses and consumers of EVs?
- Use SIMI video to highlight role of interest groups.

Main aim is to use real life policy and interest groups to then tie in during the chapter – also show policy versus legislation for students.

Primer Questions

1. Who do you think influences government decisions the most – politicians, businesses, workers, or the public? Why?

Prompts for discussion:

- Businesses → lobby through interest groups like SIMI, IBEC.
- Workers → represented by trade unions (ICTU), recent strikes in schools…
- Public → influence through elections, petitions, protests – timing of elections – Budget 2025 public have less impact as an election is a good few years away still.

- Politicians → have decision-making power but are influenced by other groups.

Suggested answer:
There isn't a correct answer so a question for thought/discussion - different groups have more influence depending on the issue. For example, SIMI (businesses) lobbies heavily on motor tax and EV incentives, unions lobby on pay and conditions, and the public can push big issues (like housing) to the top of the agenda.

2. What is the difference between a rule and a law? The idea was to think about how laws differ to policy or rules – linking to legal impact.
Prompts for discussion:
Rule → made by organisations, schools, clubs; not legally binding.
Law → passed by government/parliament; legally binding and enforceable.
Examples:
Rule = No phones in class.
Law = something with a legal consequence.
Suggested answer:
Rules are guidelines that apply in a certain setting (e.g. workplace, school). Laws are created by government, apply to everyone, and breaking them has legal consequences.

3. Can you think of a rule that isn't legally enforced?
School → uniform policy.
Workplace → clocking in on time.

4. Do you think all EU countries should follow the same rules? Why or why not?
Yes arguments: Creates fairness, avoids confusion for businesses and consumers (e.g. food safety, environmental rules).
No arguments: Countries differ in size, wealth, and culture — a rule that works in Germany may be too strict or costly for Ireland.
Introduce distinction between EU instruments used:
Regulations = same rule everywhere; GDPR in every member state.
Directives = same goals, flexible implementation; Single use plastic – Ireland chose the DRS.

Useful business examples, stories, links, videos, resources…

Digital hub links:

PowerPoint
Class exams with solutions
Worksheet for the Introduction Hook
Kahoot for formative assessment
Flashcards
Suggested solutions to workbook
Suggested solutions to sample paper questions

Key information for the chapter:

Strand 1 Chapter 4	**The influence of national and EU policy**	**2 weeks**							
Learning Intention	**Learning Outcome**	**Page**	**Time - mins**	**HL Qs**	**OL Qs**	**HL P1 Qs**	**HL P2 Qs**	**OL P1 Qs**	**OL P2 Qs**
how Irish government policy* impacts across different sectors of the economy, how policy and legislation differ, and how stakeholders in business can inform and influence policy development (including interest groups and lobbying).	4.1 Outline three Irish government policies that impact on three different sectors of the economy in Ireland*.	56-59	80	**Q1**	**Q1**			**OL1 Q4 (e)**	
	4.2 Explain the difference between government policy and legislation.	60	20	**Q2**	**Q2**			**OL1 Q4 (f)**	
	4.3 Outline the role played by business in the development of national policy.	61	30	**Q3**	**Q3**				
the key actors in EU policy development (including the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the European Central Bank).	4.4. Identify the key decision-makers in European policy development.	62-63	40	**Q4**	**Q4**			**OL1 Q3 (f)**	
The difference between EU regulations, directives and opinions based on how the Irish government must respond at national level.	4.5 Distinguish between European regulations, directives, and opinions.	64	30	**Q5**	**Q5**			**OL1 Q3 (g)**	
how the EU impacts on business activity in Ireland with a focus on the purpose of the directive/legislation, how is has been implemented in Ireland, how it can impact both positively and negatively on different stakeholders, and whether it fosters ethical and sustainable business practice and/or the use of technology. (*The regulation and directive evaluated here must be different to any legislation explored in section one and section three of Strand Four)	4.6 Evaluate the effect of one EU regulation of their choice and one EU directive of their choice on business activity in Ireland.	65-66	40	**Q6**	**Q6, Q7**	**HL1 Q5 (c)**	**HL2 Q5 (d)**		
		Total Time:	240	**Hours:**	**4.0**				

S1 Ch 4 (L.O. 4.1)

Textbook Pages: 143-147
Activity Book: HL Q1 | OL Q1
Time Allocation: 80 minutes

Learning Outcome	4.1 Outline three Irish government policies that impact on three different sectors of the economy in Ireland*.
Students Learn About	how Irish government policy* impacts across different sectors of the economy
Sample Paper Q	**OL1(ii) Q4 (e)** Identify one government policy and describe the impact this policy may have on any sector of the Irish economy
Create other potential Qs	

Specification Language Decoded

Outline: Give the main points; restrict to essential points of information

***Irish government policy**: Refers to the policy of the Irish government which includes actions or statements of guidance which are adopted by the government and used as a basis for decision-making.

***Sector of the economy (in Ireland):** The different economic activity sectors which categorise producers/service providers based on the goods or services they output. The Central Statistics Office (CSO) publish the list of sectors within the Irish economy.

1	Agriculture forestry and fishing	6	Financial and insurance activities
2	Industry	7	Real estate activities
3	Construction	8	Professional, administration and support services
4	Distribution, transport, hotels and restaurants	9	Public administration, education and health
5	Information and communication	10	Arts, entertainment and other services

R&R activity

Pg 59	Students own answers – can refer to solutions in activity book and sample paper packs

Know	Understand	Be able to do
• Examples of current Irish government policies (e.g. Climate Action Plan, Housing for All, AI Strategy	• That policy guides decision-making and can impact sectors differently (positive/negative effects)	• Outline the main features of a policy and explain its impact on a specific sector of the Irish economy.

Opportunities to differentiate for this Learning Outcome

Support Strategies	Extension Opportunities

• Use a worked example (e.g. Climate Action Plan – Energy sector) with a short case video. • Provide sentence starters for weaker students: *"The policy is… This impacts the sector because…"*	• Ask students to compare two different sectors impacted by the same policy (e.g. Climate Action Plan → energy vs transport). • Debate task: Should EV incentives remain as policy or become law?

Note

It looks like students need to learn off a policy and impact, so it would be good to encourage then to identify different policies that they have an interest in to both differentiate their answers and also make it easier to remember.

S1 Ch 4 (L.O. 4.2)

Textbook Pages: 60
Activity Book: HL Q2 | OL Q2
Time Allocation: 20 minutes

Learning Outcome	4.2 Explain the difference between government policy and legislation.
Students Learn About	How policy and legislation differ
Sample Paper Q	**OL1 Q4(f)** (i) Choose the correct words: (symbols, laws, plans) for Government policies are XXX that outline the government's intention. Legislation refers to XXX , which must be followed by all individuals and organisations.
Create other potential Qs	Identify one government policy and one piece of legislation, and explain the difference between them.

Specification Language Decoded

Explain: Give a detailed account including reasons or causes

R&R activity

Pg 60	Student answer

Know	Understand	Be able to do
• That policies are government intentions/plans; legislation is enacted law.	• That businesses must follow legislation but may also prepare for policies likely to become law.	• Explain, with examples, how policy and legislation differ.

Opportunities to differentiate for this Learning Outcome

Support Strategies	Extension Opportunities
Fill in the Blanks Give students these sentences with missing words to complete: 1. Government __________ are plans or strategies that set out what the government wants to achieve, but are not laws. *(Answer: policies)* 2. An example of a government policy to protect the environment is the __________ **Action Plan 2021**. *(Answer: Climate)* 3. __________ are laws passed by the Oireachtas that must be followed by everyone. *(Answer: Legislation)* 4. An example of legislation is the **Planning and Development** __________. *(Answer: Act)* 5. The key difference is that policies are __________, but legislation is **legally binding**. *(Answer: not laws)*	• Research a current Irish government policy and identify if any legislation has followed. • Ask students to evaluate whether certain policies (e.g. Climate Action Plan) should remain policy or be made law (extend from the EV starter activity).

S1 Ch 4 (L.O. 4.3)

Textbook Pages: 61
Activity Book: HL Q3 | OL Q3
Time Allocation: 30 minutes

Learning Outcome	4.3 Outline the role played by business in the development of national policy.
Students Learn About	How stakeholders in business can inform and influence policy development (including **interest groups** and **lobbying**).
Sample Paper Q	None
Create other potential Qs	Outline how business owners can inform and influence policy development through interest groups and lobbying. Outline one way a business can influence government policy. Outline the role of interest groups in policy formation, giving one Irish example.

Specification Language Decoded

Outline: Give the main points; restrict to essential points of information

Know	Understand	Be able to do
• Key methods businesses use to influence policy (interest groups, lobbying, advisory groups, media campaigns	• Why businesses want to shape policy (costs, taxes, sector growth, regulation).	• Outline, with examples, how businesses play a role in shaping national policy.

Opportunities to differentiate for this Learning Outcome

Support Strategies	Extension Opportunities
Provide a **fill-in-the-blanks paragraph**: Businesses can influence policy by joining ___________, using ___________ to persuade politicians, and taking part in ___________ groups. *(Answer: interest groups, lobbying, advisory)* Use a short case example (e.g. SIMI lobbying for EV incentives) and ask students to identify who is the stakeholder, what method they used, and what policy they wanted to influence.	Research task: Find a recent Irish example of business lobbying (e.g. farming, transport, housing) and outline its impact.

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S1 Ch 4 (L.O. 4.4)

Textbook Pages: 62-63
Activity Book: HL Q4 | OL Q4
Time Allocation: 40 minutes

Learning Outcome	4.4. Identify the key decision-makers in European policy development.
Students Learn About	The key actors in EU policy development (including the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the European Central Bank).
Sample Paper Q	**OL1 Q3 (f)** (i) Identify two European Union (EU) policy making institutions.
Create other potential Qs	-

Specification Language Decoded

Identify: Recognise patterns, facts, or details; provide an answer from a number of possibilities; recognise and state briefly a distinguishing fact or feature

Know	Understand	Be able to do
• The names and roles of the main EU decision-making bodies	• Their basic roles in EU policy development and how they differ.	• Identify the correct EU body when given a description of its function.

Opportunities to differentiate for this Learning Outcome

Support Strategies	Extension Opportunities
- Provide a matching exercise: Match the body (Commission, Parliament, Council, ECB) with its function. - Use a diagram/infographic to show how EU law-making works (Commission → Parliament & Council). (one is provided on page 63	Research task: Find a recent EU directive/regulation and identify which institutions were involved in its adoption.

Note

Identify is the outcome verb so it doesn't look like students will need to know lots of information on each, and more likely just know their role for multiple choice/fill in the blanks/True or false style questions.

S1 Ch 4 (L.O. 4.5)

Textbook Pages: 64
Activity Book: HL Q5 | OL Q5
Time Allocation: 30 minutes

Learning Outcome	4.5 Distinguish between European regulations, directives, and opinions.
Students Learn About	The difference between EU regulations, directives and opinions based on how the Irish government must respond at national level.
Sample Paper Q	**OL1 Q3 (g)** (ii) Circle the correct option in each of the following statements: An EU directive / regulation applies to all EU member states and has immediate effect. An EU opinion / regulation allows an EU institution to make a statement that is not legally binding.
Create other potential Qs	1. Distinguish between an EU directive and a regulation, giving one example of each. 2. Identify which EU instrument is non-binding. 3. Explain how the Irish government implements directives at national level.

Specification Language Decoded

Distinguish: Make the differences between two or more concepts or items clear

Know	Understand	Be able to do
• Definitions and examples of regulation, directive, opinions with reference to how the member state has to act.	• How the Irish government must respond at a national level to each of them	• Accurately distinguish between regulations, directives and opinions with examples, and how the Irish government must respond at national level.

Opportunities to differentiate for this Learning Outcome

Support Strategies	Extension Opportunities
Use a **fill-in-the-blanks table** with columns for **Regulation / Directive / Opinion** Applies immediately in all member states and takes precedence over national law = _________ Sets goals but lets EU member states decide how to implement it = _________ Non-binding advice = _________	Research a current EU law (regulation or directive) affecting Ireland and outline how it was implemented. Ask: *“Why might the EU sometimes prefer a directive instead of a regulation?”* Debate: *“Opinions have no legal power, so do they really matter?”*

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S1 Ch 4 (L.O. 4.6)

Textbook Pages: 65-66
Activity Book: HL Q6| OL Q6, Q7
Time Allocation: 40 minutes

Learning Outcome	4.6 Evaluate the effect of one EU regulation of their choice and one EU directive of their choice on business activity in Ireland.
Students Learn About	For each regulation/directive: 1. The **purpose** of the regulation/directive. 2. How it has been **implemented in Ireland**. 3. Its **positive and negative impacts** on different stakeholders (business owners, employees, consumers, suppliers, government, local community, investors). 4. Whether it fosters **ethical/sustainable practices** and/or encourages the **use of technology**. (*The regulation and directive evaluated here must be different to any legislation explored in section one and section three of Strand Four)
Sample Paper Q	**HL1 Q5 (c):** (i) Name an EU regulation you have studied and explain <u>how it has been implemented</u> in Ireland. (ii) Examine two positive and two negative impacts the EU regulation you named above has on different stakeholders in Ireland. **HL2 Q5 (d):** (i) Name an EU directive you have studied, and <u>explain the purpose of this EU directive</u>. (ii) Evaluate how this EU directive impacts on business activity in Ireland.
Create other potential Qs	Evaluate how this EU directive/regulation fosters ethical and sustainable business practice Examine how this EU directive/regulation fosters the use of technology

Specification Language Decoded

Evaluate (ethical judgement): Collect and examine evidence to make judgements and appraisals; describe how evidence supports or does not support a judgement; identify the limitations of evidence in conclusions; make judgements about the ideas, solutions or methods

R&R activity

Pg 65 & Pg 66	Student answers for these – see the sample paper solutions & activity book solutions for suggested solutions

Know	Understand	Be able to do
• Their own example of current EU regulations (e.g. EU ETS, GDPR) and directives (e.g.	• The purpose, implementation, impacts on stakeholders and how it fosters ethical and	• Evaluate how a directive and regulation of their choice can impact Irish businesses, including positives/negatives,

Single-Use Plastics Directive, Renewable Energy Directive).	sustainable business practice and use of technology	stakeholder perspectives, and sustainability/technology links.

Opportunities to differentiate for this Learning Outcome

Support Strategies	Extension Opportunities
Provide students with a structured scaffold and have some sentences ready made for them to use in their evaluation. The purpose of this EU [regulation/directive] is to… In Ireland, it has been implemented by… One positive impact of this law on [business owners / consumers / government] is… One negative impact of this law on [stakeholders] is… Overall, this [regulation/directive] fosters [sustainability/ethical practice/technology] because…	Research and present findings an a regulation or directive to the class.

Note

For students looking to push for top grades it could be encouraged for them to develop their own points for a regulation or directive not in the book to differentiate themselves from other students, using the same structure. Groupwork on one regulation/directive could work well here.

Links to cross-cutting themes:

Entrepreneurial Thinking:	• Policies and EU laws create both challenges and opportunities for businesses. • Example: EV incentives (policy) open opportunities for car dealers and charging infrastructure startups. • Students see how entrepreneurs must adapt to changing rules and spot opportunities in policy shifts.
Ethics and Sustainability:	• Many policies and EU directives are designed to protect the environment and society. • Example: Single-Use Plastics Directive reduces waste but also forces businesses to adapt packaging.
Digital Transformation:	• EU policy often drives technological change and digital compliance. • Example: GDPR (regulation) transformed how businesses handle data; AI strategies promote responsible tech use. • Shows students how laws encourage or regulate digital innovation.
Business and Financial Literacy:	• Businesses must understand the financial implications of policy and legislation (taxes, grants, compliance costs). • Example: EV BIK (Benefit-in-Kind) rules affect company car costs for employers and employees. • Students learn to connect government decisions to costs, competitiveness, and financial planning.

Assessments

Formative	Summative	AAC (Investigative Study)
• Think-Pair-Share on primer questions (Who influences government decisions most? Rule vs law?). • Quick True/False warm-ups and fill-in-the-blanks tasks (policy vs legislation, EU decision-makers). • Exit tickets: “One difference between policy and legislation is…”	• Class Exam (Chapter 4) with solutions (policy vs legislation, EU institutions, regulation vs directive, evaluation of one regulation/directive). • End-of-chapter activity book questions (HL Q1–Q6, OL Q1–Q7). • Sample Paper questions in the workpack	• Students can connect this chapter by showing how government or EU policy influences business strategy in their chosen investigative study topic. • Examples: SIMI lobbying on EVs, Single-Use Plastics Directive and packaging businesses, Climate Action Plan and renewable energy firms.

What examples/resources have we used before that we can adapt for this chapter?

E.g. Think-Pair-Share, Roleplays, Debates, Inquiry tasks, Digital tools

Think-Pair-Share	• On whether policies like EV incentives should stay as policy or be made law. • On whether all EU countries should follow the same rules.
Roleplays / Simulations	• Interest group (SIMI) lobbying the government on EV incentives vs government response. • EU decision-makers debate (Commission proposes vs Parliament/Council decide).
Inquiry Tasks	• Research a current Irish policy (e.g. Housing for All) and outline its impact on a sector. • Research a recent EU regulation or directive and explain how it was implemented in Ireland.

Debates	• "Business lobbying isn't good for the consumer." • "Opinions have no legal power, so they don't matter."
Digital Tools	• Online research task using recent articles (e.g. Nifti Business 2025 EV article). • Online flashcards • Online quizzes

Teacher and Department Review

1. Teaching and Learning Effectiveness	2. Differentiation and Inclusion
Did the chapter activities (starter worksheet, SIMI case, R&R tasks) effectively help students grasp the difference between policy, legislation, and EU influence? Were students able to apply real-life examples (EVs, Single-Use Plastics, Climate Action Plan) in their answers? What could help?	Did the support strategies (fill-in-the-blanks, sentence starters) help weaker students engage with the material? Were extension opportunities (debates, research on other policies) taken up by stronger students? Or do we need to try something new next time?
3. Resource Use and Gaps	**4. Connections and Continuity**
Were the PowerPoint, Kahoot, and starter worksheet sufficient, or is there a need for more video/case study material? Did students engage with the activity book and sample paper links, or do they need more scaffolding?	How well did this chapter prepare students for later strands (e.g. consumer protection, sustainability, Investigative Study)?

How this chapter can link to the key competencies at Senior Cycle

Thinking and solving problems	Students analyse how government and EU policies affect different sectors, compare directives and regulations, and evaluate stakeholder impacts building structured, problem-solving skills.
Being creative	Inquiry and debate tasks (e.g. "Should EV be incentivised using taxpayers money?") encourage students to think outside the box and consider alternative solutions to policy challenges.
Communicating	Roleplays (SIMI lobbying, EU decision-making) and debates develop oral communication, while written evaluations of policies strengthen clarity in structured answers.
Working with others	Group tasks such as researching policies or roleplaying stakeholders help students collaborate, negotiate viewpoints, and share findings.
Participating in society	By examining Climate Action, Single-Use Plastics, and EV incentives, students see how business and policy intersect in everyday Irish and EU life, encouraging civic awareness.
Cultivating wellbeing	Discussions on sustainability and ethical business (e.g. cleaner air, reduced waste) show how policy can support community and environmental wellbeing, linking economics to quality of life.
Managing learning and self	Students are encouraged to track policies, connect examples across topics, and reflect on how they could use policies and legislation in their Investigative Study, promoting independent learning skills.